

## Message from the Executive Director

I look back at 1983 as a very significant year for Aspira. In November I celebrated my first anniversary as the Executive Director of Aspira, and I am happy to report that I am alive and well. The first year of any new administration is always difficult. It is a period of adjustment and constant assessment. It is also a time for establishing relationships and setting direction.

For me, it has been a tremendous learning experience and an opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to the mission of an organization that has been so instrumental in my own personal and professional development. For me, working at Aspira is a labor of love and an opportunity to make a contribution to a movement that has so deeply enriched my life and thousands of Aspirantes like myself.

My transition was relatively smooth, thanks to a committed Board of Directors, a hard working and highly skilled staff, and to all of you who have unselfishly shared your resources to support my efforts and Aspira's program. To all of you I say "un millon de gracias," and let's continue to work together to make a difference in the lives of present and future Aspirantes.

Aspira's effectiveness and relevancy was reinforced in 1983 as a result of an independent national study conducted by Coca Cola USA which addressed Hispanic concerns. In the survey, respondents were asked to "identify the organization which has been most effective in meeting the needs of the Hispanic community." Aspira took the lead as the most effective Hispanic organization, nationwide! It is clear from the results of the study that education and job training are the priority areas among Hispanics. To that end, Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey continues to provide resources to assist youth in breaking the cycle of poverty.

We continue to serve students in the counties of Essex, Hudson and Passaic. Although we were forced to close our Hudson County Center due to funding cutbacks, Aspira continues to serve the youth of that community on site at the schools and we hope it is only a matter of time before a center will again be established.

For the past year Aspira has successfully expanded its program to include junior high school students under the premise that early intervention will have an impact in reducing the dropout rate of Hispanic high school students.

Our career oriented programs (Business & Health) continue to prove effective and serve both high school and college students in pursuing their career goals.

Finally, Aspira has initiated the development of an Alumni Network to bring back to the organization the talent and resources of those individuals who have been a part of the Aspira Movement.

The future looks bright for Aspira. With the assistance of the Board, staff, and the community at large, we will continue to strive for:

- the development of leadership among Hispanic youth;
- the achievement of educational goals for Aspirantes;
- the assurance of equity for Hispanic youth as they seek to reach their full potential; and
- the enrichment of the community at large through the contributions of the Hispanic population.

To this end, we are committed. I hope that I can continue to count on your support to make these goals a reality.



Maria Vizcarrondo-DeSoto  
Executive Director  
June 1984

## Program Report 1983

When Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey was established in 1968, its intent was to break the cycle of poverty within the Puerto Rican community. Its goals were to stem the high drop out rate, and to promote the development of leaders through the pursuit of higher education. To this end, Aspira has been faithfully providing quality services in Essex, Hudson, and Passaic Counties. Although the majority of students seen are Hispanic, Aspira offers its services to disadvantaged youth of all ethnic backgrounds, many of whom suffer from inadequate schooling, sub-standard housing, and limited life experience.

Aspira provided services through three County centers located in Newark, Jersey City and Paterson. Each center conducted activities specific to the local area, including career workshops, cultural and recreational activities, and workshops related to the college admissions process.

Students involved in Aspira's programs received individual counseling from bilingual, bi-cultural professionals who served as role models and who encouraged and motivated these Aspirantes to complete their high school education. Students also participated in a variety of activities designed to expand career awareness, promote leadership development and enhance their self-image.



*A counselor discusses financial aid opportunities with these students accepted at college.*

### Essex County Center

In Essex County students attended specialized Science, Dentistry, Financial Aid, Interview Skills, Resume Writing, Nursing, Poetry, Music and Literature workshops. Students also took part in field trips to business schools, colleges and universities.

A tutoring program in math and science was enhanced by the addition of a computer and assorted software. Aspirantes are given training in the use of the computer and programs in reading, algebra and geometry.

A major accomplishment in 1983 was the expansion of services to include junior high school students at Barringer Preparatory School. This move reflects Aspira's efforts to reach students as early as possible. In Essex County Aspira now serves students in grades 7 through college.

### Hudson County

This year, Aspira was able to expand its Business Careers Program to Hudson County. This allowed counselors to serve at Dickinson and Snyder, as well as Ferris and Lincoln High Schools. The Health Careers program continued strong at Hoboken High School with an active club of 40 members.

Activities conducted in the Leadership Clubs in Hudson County included a Pre-Med Seminar and workshops in Job Skills, Computer Science, Career Planning and



*An Aspira Club meeting at Ferris High School focuses on business career options.*



*Students from Essex, Hudson and Passaic Counties attend the Aspira Career Day Conference at St. Peter's College.*

Goal Setting, Communication Skills, and Assertiveness Training, among others. A total of 13 field trips were also conducted.

A highlight was the participation of students from the Peer Counseling Program on a panel at a Youth Conference sponsored by the Association of Children. These youngsters presented the goals and objectives of Aspira and Proyecto Entre Iguales regarding capacity building in adolescents and self-help techniques.

### **Passaic County Center**

Thanks to a Talent Search grant, the Passaic County Center was able to resume services in November 1982. Many activities were offered, including an SAT Review Course as well as workshops in Financial Aid and the College Admissions Process, Careers in Computers, Interview Techniques, and Communication Skills. In addition, field trips were conducted to William Paterson College, Rutgers University, Taylor Business Institute, and NJIT, among others.

A special accomplishment was the establishment of the Passaic County Aspira Clubs Federation composed of the officers of the Leadership Clubs in Passaic County. This Federation was able to raise \$600 which was awarded as scholarships to Jeanette Torres, John F. Kennedy High School; Donna Manadge, Eastside High School; and Pedro Sanchez, Passaic High School.

### **Statewide Activities**

This year, the **Business/Engineering Conference** was co-sponsored at New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT). Aspirantes from three counties participated in workshops conducted by minority professionals in the fields of engineering, computer science and business. The **Health Professions Conference**, co-sponsored at Mt. Sinai Hospital's School of Medicine in New York, was the first time the Aspiras of New York/New Jersey joined to implement an activity of this sort. This effort attracted students who were given the opportunity to speak directly with minority health care professionals who shared their experiences with the application process and what it's like to be in medical or dental school. The Aspirantes also attended workshops related to the future health professional, and met with admission recruiters from twenty-one health professional institutions.

Historically, minority students score lower on standardized admissions tests such as the SAT or the GMAT. To address this issue each Aspira Center conducted an **SAT Review Course**, designed to improve

the raw score of the participants through tutoring and coaching, hints and practice in test-taking, and training in relaxation techniques.

Similar courses are conducted for college students heading for graduate school by the Business Careers Program in the MCAT/DAT. This year, the MCAT Review Course was taught by ETS through a grant from Funds for the Improvement of Secondary Education (FIPSE). This was a two phase project which involved long-term coaching and extensive experience in test taking which is one proven way of increasing scores.

In addition to the conference, which exposed students to careers, and the Review Courses, which increased their chances of gaining admission into higher education, the **Leadership Clubs Program** in the schools focussed on the development of success skills and provided a forum for promoting a positive self-image. Participants conducted meetings, planned and implemented activities and did fundraising. The Passaic County Center coordinated Aspira's first annual **Leadership Conference** which was co-sponsored at Passaic County Community College. Aspirantes from all three counties attended workshops in public speaking, activity planning, and good management after hearing keynote speaker Janice Newman of "Newark and Reality" talk about the qualities of a good leader and the need for self-determination and perseverance if one is to succeed.

The **Leadership Retreat** in August was made possible this year through the generosity of Princeton University's Education Center at Blairstown, N.J. Fifty-four students attended this residential seminar which included training in communication skills, time management, goal setting and planning, parliamentary procedure and trust exercises designed to promote self-confidence and group cohesion. Students left with a greater sense of self and possessing the skills needed to succeed.

Aspira is proud of its Aspirantes. The **Annual Awards Ceremony** highlighted special accomplishments of students. Achievement Certificates were awarded to actual or potential drop-outs who have taken charge of their lives and have completed their high school degrees, in many cases going on to college. Leadership Certificates were given to individuals who have been active in the Leadership Clubs. We also acknowledged, through the awarding of Certificates of Appreciation, the contribution of our outside resource persons who are supportive of Aspira's goals and without whom we could not accomplish them. Plaques were awarded for meritorious achievement in academics and leadership. This year the recipients were:

- Academic Achievement —  
Oxiris Barbot; Wilberto Vasquez; Anthony Romero
- Excellence in Leadership —  
Luis Castillo; Anibal Cintron



*Students learn time management skills during the Annual Leadership Conference.*

## Highlights

### Aspira Professionals Acknowledged

The success of Aspira can be measured by the professionals it employs. All program staff are college graduates who are bilingual and bi-cultural like most of those worked with. Many come from backgrounds similar to that of their students and can relate to them in a personal way. A few have undergone the Aspira Process and have returned to pass on their experiences to others and thus continue the cycle of progress. Aspira counselors are dedicated individuals committed to social change and consequently involved in outside activities for the betterment of the community.

A good example is Mr. Jose R. Acevedo, Health Careers Specialist, who received an award from Passaic County Community College in recognition of his contributions to the advancement of the Puerto Rican community in Passaic County.

Ms. Betty Gerena, Coordinator of the Passaic County Center, has been selected as an Outstanding Young Woman in America for 1983. This selection was made on the basis of ability, accomplishments and services to the community.

### New Leaders Added to Board

New leadership has been added to Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey's Board of Directors. Ms. Caridad Laboy, a product of the Aspira Process, holds an MBA from Rutgers University. Ms. Laboy is an Account Executive with American Bell.

Ms. Damaris Mercado is a students representative on the Board. She is currently a high school senior at Barringer High School and intends to pursue a career in pharmacy. The other student representative is Ms. Jeanette Torres, a pre-med student at Montclair State College (MSC) and a member of Aspira's RWJ Health Careers Program.

Mr. Ronald Palm of the Veteran's Administration, and Ms. Mirva Rivera, a school teacher from Paterson, have also accepted positions on the Board. Mr. William Vazquez, an Aspirante who is presently an administrator at St. Elizabeth Hospital, completed the new members.

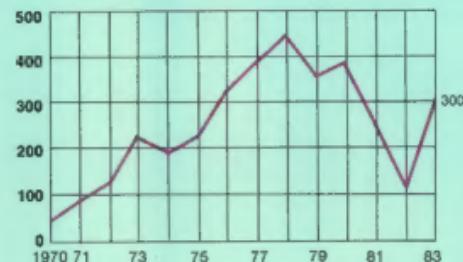
### Nation's Puerto Ricans Come to Newark

The National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights (NCPRR), a national organization advocating for the civil rights of Hispanics in the U.S., celebrated its second convention at NJIT in April. Over 650 people came from all over the United States and Puerto Rico to attend sixteen workshops in areas of concern to Hispanics such as Housing, Education, and Labor. Participants departed with new strategies for addressing these concerns in the 1980's. Aspira was supportive of this effort, contributing space, phone, printing, and other services to the Planning/Coordinating Committee. Aspira staff volunteered their time in publicity and registration.

### Students Served 1976-1983



### Post-Secondary Placements 1970-1983



**Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey**  
**Statement of Support, Revenue and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances**  
**Year Ended June 30, 1983**

**Financial Highlights**

|   | CURRENT FUNDS |            |                  |                 |
|---|---------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|
|   | Unrestricted  | Restricted | Fixed asset fund | Total all funds |
| Public support, grants and revenue:                                     |               |            |                  |                 |
| Corporations and foundations  | \$ 63,905     | \$ 65,696  | \$10,466         | \$140,067       |
| Government grants   | -             | 149,025    | -                | 149,025         |
| Transfers from Aspira of America, Inc.                                  | 3,422         | 105,036    | -                | 108,458         |
| Community, including United Way   | 31,405        | -          | -                | 31,405          |
| Capital contributions   | -             | -          | 5,156            | 5,156           |
| Miscellaneous   | 18,820        | -          | -                | 18,820          |
| Transfers of administrative overheads                                   | 14,216        | (14,216)   | -                | -               |
| Total public support, grants and revenue                                | 131,768       | 305,541    | 15,622           | 452,931         |
| Expenses:   |               |            |                  |                 |
| Program Services:   |               |            |                  |                 |
| Health career opportunities   | -             | 75,838     | -                | 75,838          |
| Public education  | 18,057        | -          | -                | 18,057          |
| Other career and educational counseling                                 | -             | 238,008    | -                | 238,008         |
| Total program services  | 18,057        | 313,846    | -                | 331,903         |
| Supporting Services:  |               |            |                  |                 |
| Management and general  | 69,384        | -          | 2,080            | 71,464          |
| Fund raising  | 24,543        | -          | -                | 24,543          |
| Total supporting services   | 93,927        | -          | 2,080            | 96,007          |
| Total expenses  | 111,984       | 313,846    | 2,080            | 427,910         |
| Excess (deficiency) of public support, grants and revenue over expenses | 19,784        | (8,305)    | 13,542           | 25,021          |
| Transfers from (to) other funds   | (3,254)       | 7,258      | (4,004)          | -               |
| Fund balance (deficit), beginning of period                             | (40,794)      | 4,893      | 2,230            | (33,671)        |
| Fund balances(deficit), end of period                                   | \$24,264      | \$ 3,846   | \$11,768         | \$ (8,650)      |

**Private Grants and Contributions (through June 1984)      Agency Contributors and Community Funds****Foundations**

The Becton, Dickinson Foundation  
The Max & Dora Cooper Family Foundation  
Thomas A. & J. Mildred Dexter Foundation  
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation  
Charles Hayden Foundation  
The Hyde & Watson Foundation  
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
The Fanny and Svante Knistrom Foundation  
Leavens Foundation  
The Merck Company Foundation  
Jay R. Monroe Memorial Foundation  
Prudential Foundation  
Roxiticus Fund  
The Florence and John Schumann Foundation  
Turrell Fund  
Victoria Foundation, Inc.

Atlantic Community College  
Aspira of America  
Bloomfield College  
Essex County College  
Hudson County Community College  
International Ladies Garment Workers Union  
Jersey City State College  
Kean College of New Jersey  
Lambda Theta Phi  
Montclair State College  
New Jersey Institute of Technology  
North Ward Center, Inc.  
Passaic County Community College  
Regional Health Planning Council  
Rutgers University  
St. Peter's College  
Seton Hall University  
Stevens Institute of Technology  
Tri-City Peoples Corp.  
United Way of Essex and West Hudson  
University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey  
WOR-TV  
YWCA-Newark

**Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey**  
**Statement of Functional Expenses**  
**Year Ended June 30, 1983**

**Financial Highlights**

|   | PROGRAM SERVICES        |                     |  |                  | SUPPORTING SERVICES       |                 |                 |                  | Total<br>Expenses |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
|   | Health<br>Opportunities | Public<br>Education | Other<br>Career and<br>Educational<br>Counseling | Total            | Management<br>and General | Fund<br>Raising | Total           |                  |                   |
| Salaries  | \$44,613                | \$ 4,200            | \$121,355  | \$170,168        | \$22,062                  | -               | \$22,062        | \$192,230        |                   |
| Payroll taxes and fringe<br>benefits                      | 9,506                   | 840                 | 21,758   | 32,104           | 6,711                     | -               | 6,711           | 38,815           |                   |
| Total salaries and related<br>costs                       | 54,119                  | 5,040               | 143,113  | 202,272          | 28,773                    | -               | 28,773          | 231,045          |                   |
| Board activities and meetings                             | -                       | -                   | -  | -                | 308                       | -               | 308             | 308              |                   |
| Education and program<br>materials                        | -                       | -                   | 2,631  | 2,631            | 68                        | -               | 68              | 2,699            |                   |
| Interest  | -                       | -                   | 182  | 182              | 1,047                     | -               | 1,047           | 1,229            |                   |
| Occupancy, utilities and<br>maintenance                   | 6,214                   | -                   | 20,152   | 26,366           | 7,916                     | 105             | 8,021           | 34,387           |                   |
| Other office operating<br>expenses                        | 1,117                   | -                   | 1,985  | 3,102            | 963                       | -               | 963             | 4,065            |                   |
| Printing and publications                                 | 637                     | 1,536               | 1,945  | 4,118            | 5,051                     | 2,349           | 7,400           | 11,518           |                   |
| Professional fees and<br>contractual services             | 2,857                   | 10,050              | 21,176   | 34,083           | 10,511                    | 21,353          | 31,864          | 65,947           |                   |
| Program activities, seminars<br>and workshops             | 1,611                   | -                   | 5,815  | 7,226            | 2,934                     | -               | 2,934           | 10,160           |                   |
| Student scholarships, stipends<br>and fellowships         | -                       | -                   | 14,850   | 14,850           | -                         | -               | -               | 14,850           |                   |
| Supplies and equipment rental                             | 4,189                   | -                   | 8,666  | 12,855           | 3,461                     | -               | 3,461           | 16,316           |                   |
| Telephone and postage                                     | 3,656                   | 268                 | 12,175   | 16,099           | 1,133                     | 480             | 1,613           | 17,712           |                   |
| Travel and meetings                                       | 712                     | 1,097               | 4,688  | 8,497            | 2,304                     | 256             | 2,560           | 9,057            |                   |
| Miscellaneous   | 37                      | 66                  | 62   | 165              | 4,915                     | -               | 4,915           | 5,080            |                   |
| Total expenses before<br>depreciation and<br>amortization | 75,149                  | 18,057              | 237,240  | 330,446          | 69,384                    | 24,543          | 93,927          | 424,373          |                   |
| Depreciation and amortization                             | 689                     | -                   | 768  | 1,457            | 2,080                     | -               | 2,080           | 3,537            |                   |
|   | <b>\$75,838</b>         | <b>\$18,057</b>     | <b>\$238,008</b>                                 | <b>\$331,903</b> | <b>\$71,464</b>           | <b>\$24,543</b> | <b>\$96,007</b> | <b>\$427,910</b> |                   |

**Corporations**

Airco, Inc.  
 Allied Corporation  
 Arrow Group Industries, Inc.  
 At&T/Bell Labs  
 Bally's Park Place Casino Hotel  
 Barton Savings & Loan Assoc.  
 Broad National Bank  
 Ciba-Geigy Corp.  
 City National Bank of NJ  
 Connection Communications Corp.  
 Joseph Cory Warehouses, Inc.

Crum & Forster Corp.  
 Edwards & Kelcy, Inc.  
 Fidelity Union Trust Co.  
 First Jersey National Bank  
 First National State Bank of NJ  
 Gateway Hilton  
 Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc.  
 Howard Savings Bank  
 Jacobs  
 Johnson & Johnson  
 Laventhal & Horwath

Margolin Corporation  
 Midlantic National Bank  
 Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co.  
 Nabisco, Inc.  
 New Jersey Bell  
 Prudential Insurance Co. of America  
 PSE&G  
 Sandoz, Inc.  
 Schering-Plough Corp.  
 Scott Printing Corp.  
 Supermarkets General Corp.

Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey

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Annual Report  
 July 1, 1982 to June 30, 1983

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